

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, BL, CI, EC, PE
SUBJECT: MEETINGS OF SUB-REGIONAL LEADERS IN WASHINGTON

1. ON THE FLIGHT BACK TO LIMA PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ AND FOREIGN MINISTER DE LA PUENTE DISCUSSED WITH ME THE RESULTS OF THEIR CONTACTS IN WASHINGTON WITH BANZER, POVEDA AND PINOCHET. THIS INFORMATION MAY ALREADY BE AVAILABLE TO THE DEPARTMENT FROM OTHER SOURCES BUT DOES SEEM WORTH RECORDING.

2. THE PERUVIAN LEADERS WERE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THESE CONTACTS, NOTING THE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY PRESIDENT CARTER'S INITIATIVE HAD PROVIDED IN PERMITTING MEETINGS THAT OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE BEEN MOST DIFFICULT TO ARRANGE. THEY WERE ALSO PLEASED WITH THEMSELVES FOR TAKING THE LEAD IN SETTING UP THE ANDEAN PACT GATHERING, IN PROPOSING THE TALK WITH POVEDA AND IN BEING SO RELAXED AND "FLEXIBLE" ABOUT THE TRIPARTITE ENCOUNTER BANZER WANTED SO MUCH. (THE LATTER POINT SPECIFICALLY HAD TO DO WITH
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MORALES BERMUDEZ'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE CHANGE OF VENUE TO THE CHILEAN EMBASSY AFTER BANZER HAD INITIALLY PROPOSED HIS OWN EMBASSY). DE LA PUENTE THOUGHT THE MEETING WITH POVEDA MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE FIRST SUCH BILATERAL IN 40 YEARS AND THE TRIPARTITE MEETING THE FIRST IN "ONE HUNDRED". HE WAS GOING TO PUT HIS RESEARCHERS TO WORK ON THESE PROPOSITIONS.

3. ACCORDING TO THE PERUVIANS, POVEDA AND MORALES BERMUDEZ INSTRUCTED THEIR FOREIGN MINISTERS TO BEGIN WORK AT ONCE ON THE QUESTION OF DELIMITING THE REMAINING 75 KILOMETERS OR SO OF DISPUTED BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. DE LA PUENTE SAID HE EXPECTED POSITIVE RESULTS IN A SHORT TIME. HE FORSAW ANNOUNCEMENTS BEFORE LONG OF BILATERAL COOPERATION IN ORDER AREAS AND IN SHORT, A NEW ERA IN PERUVIAN-ECUADORIAN RELATIONS.

4. I ASKED ABOUT ACCESS TO THE AMAZON. MORALES BERMUDEZ SAID THIS COULD BE A QUESTION OF "PERUVIAN NATIONAL SECURITY". THE ECUADORIANS SEEM TO WANT TO DRIVE A WEDGE INTO PERUVIAN TERRITORY, CUTTING OFF A PIECE WHERE THERE ARE PROSPECTS FOR PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT. (I ASSUME HE MEANS TO THE NORTH OF THE NAPO RIVER.) THE PRESIDENT REMINDED ME THAT WE ARE GUARANTORS OF THE RIO PROTOCOL AND THAT WHILE ECUADOR IS ASKING FOR OUR HELP IN OBTAINING IN EFFECT A REVISION OF THAT DOCUMENT, PERU HAS NOT CALLED UPON US TO ASSURE STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH ITS TERMS. IN RESPONSE TO MY PROBING, NEITHER THE PRESIDENT NOR DE LA PUENTE RULED OUT DISCUSSION WITH ECUADOR ON THE ISSUE. BUT I COULD DETECT NO GIVE IN THE PERUVIAN POSITION.

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5. ACCORDING TO THEIR ACCOUNT, THE PERUVIANS AT THE TRIPARTITE AFFAIR EXPRESSED GOOD WILL, GOOD INTENTIONS AND UNDERSTANDING OF BOLIVIAN ASPIRATIONS. MORALES BERMUDEZ SAID HE HAD MADE CLAR THAT PERU WOULD BE READY FOR GOOD FAITH DISCUSSIONS ONCE BOLIVIA AND CHILE REACH AGREEMENT ON A PROPOSAL. HE ALSO PURPORTEDLY EMPHASIZED THE PERUVIAN VIEW THAT THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION MUST NOT BE A SOURCE OF POSSIBLE FUTURE CONFLICT, BUT RATHER MUST GUARANTEE "PERMANENT PEACE" FOR THE AREA.

6. DURING A RATHER LENGTHY AND AT TIMES EMOTIONAL DISCUSSION OF THE SUBJECT (INCLUDING FAMILIAR REFERENCES TO THE HUASCAR AND THE OCCUPATION OF LIMA) THE PRESIDENT MADE TWO CONTRASTING POINTS ABOUT HIS POSITION: (1) PERU HAS NO TERRITORIAL DESIGNS -- NO DESIRE TO ADMINISTER A "FEW MORE KILOMETERS OF DESERT"; (2) BUT PER SHOULD HAVE AS PART OF THE SOLUTION SOME "SYMBOLIC" RECOMPENSE FOR THE AGGRESSION IT SUFFERED. HE REFERRED IN TERMS OF THE KIND OF SYMBOL HE HAD IN MIND TO THE "PERUVIAN FLAG FLYING ALONGSIDE THE CHILEAN", AS IN THE TRIPARTITE COASTAL PRESECE IN PERU'S COUNTER PROPOSAL. HE NOTED IN THAT CONNECTION HOW CLOSELY HE IS WATCHED

ON THIS ISSUE BY DOMESTIC POLITICAL ELEMENTS OF ALL KINDS. IN OTHER WORDS, HISTORY AND POLITICS CALL FOR SOME GESTURE OF CHILEAN ATONEMENT BEFORE THIS ANCIENT QUARREL CAN BE PUT TO REST.

7. WITH RESPECT TO CHILE, DE LA PUENTE TOLD ME IT HAD BEEN DECIDED THAT MORALES BERMUDEZ AND PINOCHET WOULD MEET WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME -- PERHAPS IN AS LITTLE AS SIX WEEKS. HE WAS CHARGED WITH WORKING OUT WITH CARVAJAL THE VENUE AND OTHER DETAILS. DE LA PUENTE SAID HE WAS CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF A PROPOSAL FOR THE "DEMILITARIZATION" OF THE BORDER INVOLVING A SUBSTANTIAL PULLBACK OF THE MILITARY UNITS ON BOTH SIDES. THE WEAKNESS IN THAT SCHEME, HE OBSERVED, CONFIDENTIAL

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WOULD BE THE APPARENT ADVANTAGE TO PERU, GIVEN THE FACT THAT ANYTHING SHORT OF A DRASTIC WITHDRAWAL WOULD LEAVE CHILE WITH THE SAME LOGISTICS AND LINES-OF-SUPPLY PROBLEMS.

8. BOTH DE LA PUENTE AND MORALES BERMUDEZ PROFESSED TO BE HURT AND SURPRISED AT WHAT THEY SENSED TO BE PERU'S IMAGE IN WASHINGTON AS A WAR-LIKE POWER BENT ON AGGRESSION. THEY COMPLAINED WITH SOME HEAT THAT CHILE AND ECUADOR HAVE BEEN TELLING US FALSE TALES, EVIDENTLY, IN THEIR VIEW, IN THE SERVICE OF ULTERIOR PURPOSES. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, THEY ASSERTED THAT NEITHER HAD REGISTERED SUCH CONCERNS DIRECTLY WITH THE GOP. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT AS A MILITARY MAN HE COULD PERCEIVE ONLY TWO REASONS TO WAGE A WAR OF AGGRESSION IN THIS AGE: FOR ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE OR TO SERVE A HIGH STRATEGIC PURPOSE. NEITHER, HE SAID, COULD APPLY TO PERU'S SITUATION. HE SAID AGAIN THAT WAR IN THIS REGION WOULD BE "MADNESS" AND THAT THOSE WHO TALK OF IT IN RELATION TO SUCH MATTERS AS THE BOLIVIAN CORRIDOR MUST BE PURSUING "HIDDEN" INTERESTS. I NOTED ONCE AGAIN THAT AN END TO THE ARMY BUILD-UP FROM WHATEVER SOURCE WOULD BE A GREAT HELP.

9. COMMENT: PERHAPS THERE IS AN IDEA SOMEWHERE AROUND FOR A SYMBOLIC GESTURE ACCEPTABLE TO THE CHILEANS THAT COULD BE USED TO MOVE THE PERUVIANS ALONG ON THE CORRIDOR ISSUE. I WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY THINKING THE DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE GIVEN TO THIS ISSUE. I WOULD ALSO BE INTERESTED IN ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN PREPARED ON ECUADOR'S DEMAND FOR ACCESS TO THE AMAZON. WHAT EXACTLY IS IT THAT THE GOE WANTS AND ON WHAT TERMS? CONFIDENTIAL

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